

an image forming device;

processing circuitry associated with the image forming device;

computer program code implemented on the processing circuitry and

operative to count page-area and toner coverage at the image forming device collected on a print job-by-print job basis; and

memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative to store a data file containing the user information, the output job information, and the usage information comprising total page area used and toner used.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the data file is a census transaction data file comprising cost accounting information of consumables utilized by the image forming device when generating output jobs.

3. (amended) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the total page area comprises paper usage and the output job information comprises information detailing a print job.

4. (amended) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a tracking apparatus configured to implement hybrid pull-push data gathering of transaction details from the image forming device including consumable usage information.

5. (amended) The apparatus of claim 4 further comprising a plurality of image forming devices, and wherein the tracking apparatus polls the image forming devices to collect transaction details at each of the image forming devices, and wherein at least one of the image forming devices is configured to push the transaction details to the tracking device, if not polled, prior to a memory overflow event occurring on the at least one image forming device.

6. (amended) The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising a user

interface configured to receive unique user identification information from a user at the image forming device, wherein the processing circuitry receives the user identification information and merges the user identification information with cost data upon job completion.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a domain

controller, wherein a user submits a print job to the image forming device from the client computer, and wherein the domain controller verifies identification of the user.

8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the image forming device

includes a user interface, and wherein a walk-up user submits a copy job to the image forming device via the user interface.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the user interface includes a

reader operative to identify the walk-up user.

10. (amended) A hard copy output device usable with a local area network (LAN) and a client computer, comprising:

processing circuitry communicating with the hard copy output device and operative to receive LAN data packets from the client computer over the LAN that identify a user and a print job; and

memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative to store a data file containing the LAN data packets and consumable usage information including actual toner usage.

11. The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein the consumable

usage information comprises paper usage and toner usage collected at the hard copy output device corresponding with print job completion.

1           12. The hard copy device of claim 11 further comprises a user  
2 interface configured to enable a user to input a user identification.

1           13. The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein cost information is  
2 collected at the hard copy output device on a print-job-by-print-job basis.

1           14. The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein the hard copy output  
2 device increments page counts to obtain cost information.

1           15. The hard copy device of claim 10 further comprising an LDAP  
2 server and a local area network (LAN), wherein the LDAP server maintains user  
3 information and is operative to implement consumable cost recovery.

1           16. (amended) A method of accounting for consumable usage for  
2 an image forming device, comprising:  
3 collecting data identifying a user and a print job;  
4 storing the data in a memory of the image forming device;  
5 generating a print job with the image forming device;  
6 determining consumable usage data including actual toner usage at  
7 the image forming device; and  
8 storing the consumable usage data in the memory of the image  
9 forming device.

1           17. The method of claim 16 wherein the step of storing the  
2 consumable usage data in the memory comprises storing the page usage and the  
3 toner usage in the memory associated with the data identifying the user and the  
4 print job.